

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 SNM-02 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 SCEM-02

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P R 021217Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7970

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

DEA HQS

CINCPAC

USSAG NAKON PHANOM

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 17154

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH
NOVEMBER 2

REF: BANGKOK 16744

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SUMMARY: THE SANYA GOVERNMENT IS WALKING A FINE LINE BETWEEN HUSBANDING ITS FEW POLITICAL RESOURCES AND TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO PLACATE PUBLIC FEARS AND TACKLING PRESSING POLITICAL/ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK EXHIBITED THE MORAL STRENGTH OF HIS GOVERNMENT BY REFUSING LUCRATIVE GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS POSITIONS NORMALLY SINE QUA NON FOR RANKING OFFICIALS. THE POLICE DIRECTOR GENERAL, IN A MORE TO RESURRECT POLICE MORALE, IS EXPEDITING POLICE HANDLING OF MAJOR OUTSTANDING CORRUPTION AND INFLUENCE CASES. FEARS THAT FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN MIGHT STAGE A COMEBACK FROM TAIPEI SEVERELY HAMPER CORDIAL RTG-ROC RELATIONS. BOWING TO THESE SAME FEARS, THE RTG RELUCTANTLY USED INFAMOUS ARTICLE 17 TO FREEZE THE ASSETS OF THE FORMER LEADERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE SANYA GOVERNMENT FACES INFLATIONARY PROBLEMS FROM THE WORLD CRUDE OIL SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK AND SOME OF HIS MINISTERS, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TALES OF CORRUPTION PARADED BEFORE THE PUBLIC IN THE NEWSPAPERS, EASILY SOLIDIFIED THE MORAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PRESENT AND PAST GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP. SANYA REFUSED A LUCRATIVE POSITION ON THE LOTTERY BUREAU BOARD USUALLY HELD BY THE PRIME MINISTER. HE AND FINANCE MINISTER BOONMA WONGSAWAN HAVE RESIGNED FROM THEIR POSTS IN PRIVATE COMPANIES. DEPUTY COMMERCE MINISTER CHAROON SIBUNRUANG, WHO CAN AFFORD TO, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL NOT USE HIS OFFICIAL CAR AND WILL DONATE HIS SALARY TO CHARITY.

2. POLICE GENERAL PRACHUAB SUNTHARANGKUL, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (TNPD), MOVING TO RESURRECT POLICE MORALE AND IMPROVE THE POLICE IMAGE, RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE TNPD WOULD EXPEDITE INVESTIGATIONS ON OUTSTANDING CORRUPTION AND INFLUENCE CASES. THE POLICE HAVE ALREADY ARRESTED FORMER KORAT GOVERNOR PRAMUAN SATTHATHIP AND THREE POLICE OFFICERS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN AN EIGHT MONTH OLD MURDER CASE. THE INTERIOR MINISTER RELIEVED PRAMUAN OF HIS JOB, SO THAT THE POLICE AND COURTS COULD HAVE A FREE HAND TO SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE (BANGKOK 17058). THE POLICE COMPLETED THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE THUNG YAI GAME RESERVE POACHING SCANDAL, TURNING THE CASE OVER TO THE KANCHANABURI PROVINCIAL PROSECUTOR.

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3. THE SANYA GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN UNDER PRESSURE TO FORESTALL A MUCH-FEARED BUT HIGHLY UNLIKELY COMEBACK BY THE EXILED LEADERS, PARTICULARLY PRAPHAT AND NARONG IN TAIPEI. THE RTG RELUCTANTLY USED INFAMOUS ARTICLE 17 OF THE 1972 INTERIM CONSTITUTION TO FREEZE THE ASSETS OF THE KITTIKACHORN AND CHARUSATHIEN FAMILIES. THE ARG, APPARENTLY WARY ABOUT UPSETTING IMPORTANT ECONOMIC INTERESTS WHOSE SUPPORT IS REQUIRED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT, DID NOT CONFISCATE THE ASSETS AS YET, HOWEVER (BANGKOK 17064).

4. THESE SAME FEARS HAVE FOUND OTHER TARGETS. THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (ROC) AND AMERICAN EMBASSIES RECEIVED MOURNING WREATHS FROM THE THAMMASAT GRADUATE CLUB OCTOBER 30 IN PROTEST AGAINST HARBORING PRAPHAT, NARONG, AND THANOM (BANGKOK 17002). DESPITE RTG DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENT LEADERS TO DISCOURAGE SUCH PROTESTS, STUDENTS HELD A SMALL DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE ROC EMBASSY NOVEMBER 2. FEEDING ON THESE FEARS, THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE PUBLISHED ARTICLES OR LETTERS CAUTIONING THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THIS OR THAT OFFICIAL WHO SUPPOSEDLY WAS AN INIMATE CONFIDANT OF THE EXILES.

5. THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO SAIGON, COLONEL PATTANA PHAYAKKANITHI, FLEW WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION TO TAIPEI SHORTLY AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF PRAPHAT AND NARONG. HIS TRIP FUELED FEARS ABOUT A COMEBACK ATTEMPT. THIS INDISCRETION, AND PATTANA'S PREVIOUS ASSOCIATION WITH PRAPHAT AS AN ORGANIZER OF A FORMER GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTY, COST HIM HIS JOB (BANGKOK 17064).

6. ALTHOUGH HE HAS LOWERED HIS PUBLIC EXPOSURE, THE KING INTERMITTENTLY LENDS HIS PRESTIGE TO THE SANYA GOVERNMENT. IN AN UNPRECEDENTEDLY POLITICAL SPEECH TO SOME 675 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES OCTOBER 27, THE KING COUNSELLED THEM TO REMAIN UNITED IN THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS TO FIGHT CORRUPTION. HE STRESSED NATIONAL UNITY AND COMMUNALITY OF INTERESTS IN SEVERAL CONTEXTS, AND URGED THE STUDENTS TO GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO THEIR STUDIES (BANGKOK 17069).

7. COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT RADIO BROADCASTS DURING THE OCTOBER 14 CRISIS THAT THE RIOTERS WERE COMMUNISTS, AND CLAIMS CREDIT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE THANOM GOVERNMENT. LT. GENERAL SAIYUD KERDPHOL OF THE COMMUNIST SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS COMMAND TOLD US HE IS PLANNING A LEAFLET

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DROP CAMPAIGN IN INSURGENT AREAS TO DISTRIBUTE SAFE CONDUCT PASSES AND TELL THE TRUE STORY ABOUT HOW THE THANOM GOVERNMENT FELL. SAIYUD FEELS THAT THE RTG MUST MOVE QUICKLY BECAUSE THE INSURGENTS CAN NO LONGER ATTACK THEIR MAIN TARGET: THE "THANOM-PRAPHAT CLIQUE". SAIYUD PLANS TO FOLLOW UP THE LEAFLET CAMPAIGN WITH A PSYOPS PROGRAM THAT WILL SEND SELECTIVE STUDENTS TO INSURGENT PROVINCES TO TELL THE STORY ON THE "REVOLUTION" IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 SNM-02 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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P R 021217Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WAHSDC PRIORITY 7971

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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USSAG NAKON PHANOM

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8. THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE (CDC) HAS DIVIDED ITSELF INTO THREE SUB-COMMITTEES TO FACILITATE ITS WORK. PRAKOB HUTASING, JUSTIC MINISTER AND CDC CHAIRMAN, REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE NEW TEXT WILL BE BASED ON THE 1949 CONSTITUION. THAT DOCUMENT ESTABLISHED A BICAMERAL ASSEMBLY. A UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE ELECTED THE LOWER HOUSE, AND THE KING APPOINTED THE UPPER HOUSE UPON THE COUNTERSIGNATURE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROAYL PRIVY COUNCIL. THE 1949
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CONSTITUTION IS FAVORED TODAY BECAUSE IT WAS THE FIRST

DOCUMENT IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT, SPECIFICALLY THE MILITARY, DID NOT DIRECTLY APPOINT ALL OR HALF OF THE PARLIAMENT.

9. OVERWHELMINGLY DEPENDENT AS IT IS CRUDE OIL, THE SANYA GOVERNMENT IS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE ITS FIRST PRICE PRESSURE DIFFICULTY FROM WORLD CRUDE OIL DEVELOPMENTS. ALTHOUGH THE RTG HAS FOR SOME TIME TRIED TO ARTIFICIALLY HOLD DOWN VARIOUS PRICES, PARTICULARLY GASOLINE (BANGKOK 16727), SOME INCREASE FOR CONSUMERS SEEMS UNAVOIDABLE (SEPTTEL).

10. CONVERSATIONS WITH UP-COUNTRY OFFICIALS GAVE AN IMPRESSIONIST PICTURE OF INTEREST IN AND IGNORANCE ABOUT EVENTS IN BANGKOK. SOME OFFICIALS HAVE WELCOMED THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT AS A STEP TOWARD IMPROVING PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATION. IN A NUMBER OF CONTACTS, HOWEVER, UP-COUNTRY OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED NEITHER OFFICIAL NEWS ABOUT THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT, NOR INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR BANGKOK HOME OFFICES. ONE IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL WAS UNAWARE THAT HE HAD A NEW BOSS. THIS PICTURE EMPHASIZES THE POINT THAT THAI POLITICAL LIFE IS CENTERED IN BANGKOK. THIS IS WHY THE UPSTART STUDENT MOVEMENT, RATHER THAN THE MORE OSSIFIED COMMUNIST INSURGENCY, BROUGHT THE THANOM GOVERNMENT DOWN.
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